

Message Text

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51

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01 SAB-01 EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5553

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

USINT DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

USINT BAGHDAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UK, IT, NL, XF

SUBJ: MINTOFF STATEMENT ON EUROPEAN AND MIDDLE EAST TOURS

REF: VALLETTA 0891(NOTAL); LONDON 05210 (NOTAL); THE HAGUE 2362 (NOTAL).

1. SUMMARY: IN A DETAILED BUT CURIOUSLY UNINFORMATIVE REPORT
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TO PARLIAMENT MAY 20, PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF

HIS VISIT TO EUROPE APRIL 22 TO 27 AND TO THE MIDDLE EAST MAY 6 TO 16. APART FROM THE NAMES OF THOSE HE MET, AND SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION IN MOST GENERAL TERMS, MINTOFF PROVIDED NO SUBSTANTIAL DETAILS, NOR DID HE REVEAL RESULTS OF ANY NATURE.

2. MINTOFF DESCRIBED HIS MEETING WITH WILSON AS MOST CORDIAL, "SO MUCH SO THAT AFTER THE MEETING THE BRITISH PRIME MINISTER SUGGESTED THAT THE TALKS BE CONTINUED AT DINNER IN THE SAME PLACE (NO 10) SO THAT HE COULD HEAR THE VIEWS OF OTHER BRITISH MINISTERS INVITED FOR THE OCCASION." HE SAID THAT DEFENSE CUTS HAD NOT BEEN DISCUSSED AT THESE MEETINGS. FOLLOWING THE STATEMENT, OPPOSITION SPOKESMAN PROVOKED MINTOFF INTO SAYING THAT EITHER PARTY COULD REVOKE THE BASE AGREEMENT, BUT HE CONCLUDED THAT BOTH PARTIES WOULD HONOR THE AGREEMENT (SEPTTEL).

3. HIS COMMENTS ON HIS VISITS TO SCOTLAND AND AMSTERDAM AND ITALY WERE ALONG LINES PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY THIS AND OTHER EMBASSIES.

4. IN BEIRUT, MINTOFF SAID THAT POSSIBLE AIR LINKS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE DISCUSSED, AS WELL AS ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION, JOINT VENTURES, SHIP CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR, SEA COMMUNICATIONS, TOURISM, AND POLLUTION.

5. IN SAUDI ARABIA, MALTA'S DIFFICULTIES WITH HIGH FUEL, FOOD, FODDER AND RAW MATERIAL PRICES WERE DISCUSSED, AND THE SAUDI ARABIANS PROMISED TO "GIVE THE PEOPLE OF MALTA DUE CONSIDERATION WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS OF THE HEAVY BURDENS ALREADY BEING CARRIED."

6. IN DUBAI, OIL PRICES AND SHIP-BUILDING AND REPAIR WERE DISCUSSED, AND IN DAMASCUS TALKS WERE HELD WITH THE PRESIDENT AND FOREIGN MINISTER ON "THE TOUGH PROBLEM BETWEEN THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS."

7. FOLLOWING THESE STATEMENTS, OPPOSITION LEADER BORG OLIVIER ATTEMPTED TO GET MINTOFF TO DESCRIBE CONCRETE RESULTS FROM HIS TRAVELS, BUT MINTOFF SAID THAT HE DID NOT WANT TO RAISE HOPES WHICH MIGHT NOT BE FULLY REALIZED. WHEN THERE ARE FIRM AGREEMENTS, FULL INFORMATION WOULD BE PROVIDED, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE ALSO SAID THAT HE WOULD REPORT ON ATTEMPTS THAT HAD FAILED.

8. COMMENT: IT SEEMS APPARENT THAT MINTOFF'S TRAVELS FAILED TO BRING ANY IMMEDIATE BENEFITS TO MALTA. HIS REACTION TO HIS UK VISIT, HOWEVER, IS CLEAR INDICATION THAT FOR THE PRESENT, AT LEAST, MALTA/UK RELATIONS ARE ON AN EVEN KEEL. GETZ

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